



Mary Lazich

Wisconsin State Senator

Senate District 28

Testimony of Senator Mary Lazich Wisconsin Lions Club distinguishing license plates (AB 465) Assembly Committee on Transportation

Good morning, Chairman Steinbrink and members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the committee about Assembly Bill 465 (AB 465) that would create special distinguishing registration plates for the Lions Clubs of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin is truly blessed to have over 20,000 members in 562 Wisconsin Lions Clubs. These war-hearted souls provide a tremendous public service assisting numerous worthwhile programs statewide. And it's not just those individuals who officially enroll as members who work their magic. The Lions Clubs are aided by hundreds of thousands of volunteers that make all the wonderful work they do possible.

Lions Club International boasts more than 1.3 million men and women in 45,000 clubs in 205 countries. It is the biggest charitable organization in the world, and Wisconsin is proud to be part of this global effort to give back to our communities.

The Mission Statement of Lions Clubs International sums it up very nicely:

"To empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions clubs"

Their motto is simply, "We Serve."

To say the Lions Clubs "serve" is an understatement. The ongoing charitable work of these many Clubs is utterly amazing. Thanks to the Lions Clubs, valuable resources are raised to help important efforts. Here are just a few:

- The Wisconsin Lions camp for blind and disabled children.
- The Wisconsin Lions Eye Bank.
- The crusade by the Wisconsin Lions to wipe out blindness.
- The Wisconsin Lions eye glass recycling program.
- The Wisconsin Lions Hearing Aid project.
- The Wisconsin Lions diabetic prevention program.
- The Wisconsin Lions youth programs.



And there are so many others that we, as a state should be proud to declare are happening right here.

The Lions Clubs are what Wisconsin is all about: neighbor helping neighbor, communities watching out for one another, those that have giving to those who don't

have as much. The Lions Clubs embody a spirit that makes Wisconsin such a great state.

The charitable work performed by the Lions Clubs goes far beyond what I have personally witnessed. There are intrinsic, intangible benefits the Lions Clubs are responsible for that we cannot begin to measure that are derived directly from their stated purposes. The Lions Clubs:

- Foster a spirit of understanding among the peoples of the world.
- Promote principles of good government and good citizenship.
- Take an active interest in the civic, cultural, social and moral welfare of the community.
- Provide a forum for the open discussion of all matters of public interest; provided, however, that partisan politics and sectarian religion shall not be debated by club members.
- Encourage service-minded people to serve their community without personal financial reward, and encourage efficiency and promote high ethical standards in commerce, industry, professions, public works and private endeavors.

Members of the Wisconsin Lions Clubs have done amazing work. Now they want to reach out with a helping hand to even more Wisconsin residents. The Lions Clubs can expand their altruistic deeds by increasing their membership. To do so, they must heighten awareness and increase their visibility. A perfect way to achieve this charitable goal is to create special Wisconsin Lions Club license plates.

These special plates would be administered by the same provisions as other special plates that have been issued by the state. Proceeds from their sales would go to the Wisconsin Lions Foundation, Inc., located in Rosholt, Wisconsin.

We have a wonderful opportunity to do some incredible political goodwill. The license plates would not only generate needed funds for all the outstanding work done by 520 clubs, but would proudly spread the word about this special brand of Wisconsinites. And isn't that what our special license plates are all about: Shining a light on what we, as a state, cherish, admire and respect?

I strongly urge you to support Assembly Bill 465 that will allow Lions Clubs to not only continue but increase already successful programs and begin new charitable projects throughout Wisconsin with benefits to so many of our citizens, benefits that can only be classified as priceless. The Lions Clubs are making remarkable contributions to the entire state. With your support of Assembly Bill 465, the clubs can do even more.